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Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University Medical Center
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I am writing in reply to your letter about a memoir for Ed Tatum. I am afraid I can't be as helpful as I would like in that I was an undergraduate in 1940 rather than a graduate student.

Let me tell you what I can. I remember well the course that Ed gave on Comparative Biochemistry; I was enrolled in it. I believe the year that I took the course was the academic year 1941-42, i.e., the first year that I was a graduate student. I liked the course because it was the first time that intermediary metabolism made much sense to me in the Tatum made metabolic pathways understandable, as they were known in those days, by consolidating information from a variety of sources and describing pathways in a variety of organisms. It was my first introduction to bacterial metabolism and it was the following year or so that I took a short version of the famous course given by C.B. van Niel, normally at Hopkins Institute, but given at Stanford during the war years. I am sorry that I have no written records of either course. He and Ed Tatum collaborated in giving the course and once again it was a most enjoyable experience. My own recollections of the development of the work on Neurospora are not very good. This is because, in part, I was a graduate student in Chemistry rather than in Biology. My first real contact with Neurospora came, when at the recommendation of Hubert Loring, Beadle and Tatum offered me a Nutrition Foundation Fellowship to carry out my graduate work. The problem was really a collaboration between Loring, Tatum and Beadle, although our publications did not carry Beadle and Tatum's names. My problem was to investigate further the nutritional requirements of the purine and pyrimidine requiring mutants of Neurospora. These studies turned out very well and I believe were the first, following the work of Fries, showing that there were some nucleic acid derivatives which could indeed serve as growth factors. Thus, I am afraid I came into the picture a

little too late to really give you any clear information of development of ideas concerning Neurospora and Ed Tatum's contributions to them. My memories of Ed Tatum are those of an excellent teacher and good friend; the comparative biochemistry course was an outstanding one. He was a member of my dissertation committee.

If there is any other way that I can be of help I will be glad to. If you haven't already done so you might contact Carlton Schwerdt in the Microbiology Department at Stanford to see what his recollections are. He became a graduate student two years before I did and may have a more direct recollection of some of the events leading to the work on Neurospora.

Sincerely yours,

John G. Pierce

JGP:kk